

Prepare Yourself to Raise a Family in the Lord

HARTMAN RECTOR, JR.

This is the most imposing congregation I think I have ever spoken to, and I haven't spoken to you yet. It is delightful to be with you here. I deem it a great honor and a privilege to greet you this evening on this Sabbath day in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We meet in his name; it is because of him that we are here. Everything we do in this life that is really worthwhile comes through the Master. If it hadn't been for him, this couldn't be done.

Down in the Alabama-Florida Mission, the southern part of the United States, I found that there are a lot of "good" people (*good* is, of course, a relative term) who do not believe that Latter-day Saints (Mormons, they call us) are really Christians. Of course, we are.

In the words of the great prophet Nephi, recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of 2 Nephi, verse 26:

We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.

We are Christians. We are of Christ and we look to him as the author and finisher of our faith. It is so important that we understand our responsibilities to him. He has bought us with

a price. Yes, he gave everything for us. He did it because he loved us. He took upon himself *our* sins that we might go free. He had no sins of his own. It was you and it was me that caused him to suffer, but he did it because he loved us, that we might be able to walk uprightly before him and come to know him, that we might know our Father.

Inner and Outer Beauty

You look good; you are a good-looking group. I think you are probably the best-looking group in all of this world, not because of the way you wear your hair or the clothes you wear or the false eyelashes you sometimes wear. (You see, you can louse up beauty if you're not careful.) No, you're beautiful because of the spirit that is within you. God is a spirit, but man is also a spirit the same as God is a spirit. That is the real you; that is what is inside and that is what makes you beautiful.

I had the opportunity some time ago to speak to a group in Pocatello, Idaho, at a Laurels Standards Night. I met a sister there

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who was eighty-four years old and had been playing the organ in the church since she was twelve years of age. I believe she is one of the most beautiful women that I have ever seen. Oh, she was wrinkled, sure; but to be wrinkled doesn't mean anything. The spirit that was inside of this good sister was radiant; and because it was, she was beautiful. I've known girls who were comely in face and figure but they weren't really beautiful because that radiance wasn't inside. We pretty much look on the outside like we are on the inside. It is almost impossible to hide what is inside. You can try, but it isn't usually successful.

My grandmother had a favorite expression: "Pretty is as pretty does." I'd see a young girl that I thought was pretty (and I know beauty when I see it, I can prove that) and I'd say, "Grandmother, she's pretty." She'd always say, "Pretty is as pretty does." The comic Andy Griffith claims that "beauty is only skin deep but ugliness goes clean through to the bone." Well, beauty goes all the way through too, and it's what we are inside that makes us look like we do on the outside. That is the reason the sisters in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the kingdom of God, are the most beautiful in all the world because of what they really are.

As I travel about the Church and have opportunities to visit the different stakes of Zion, I spend the biggest part of Saturday afternoon talking to the stake leadership—the brethren. In the evening I usually have an opportunity to have them invite their wives to accompany them, and they always look much better in the evening meetings than in the afternoon. It never ceases to amaze me (it always comes to my attention as I look into the faces of those lovely sisters sitting next to those not-so-handsome brethren)—now "just how did he talk her into that?" But I know how he did it really, because I've had some experience along that line too. If he loves her enough and he tells her often enough that he

does, and then he does nice little things for her to prove that he does, why, he could talk her into almost anything. She can't turn down love—it's impossible.

Obedience, Sacrifice, and Love

Until missionaries learn this great lesson—that unless you love your contacts you can't baptize them—they're no good as missionaries. We go into the mission field to learn great lessons. The first great lesson is obedience. It is the first law of heaven. Coupled with obedience is sacrifice, which simply means that instead of endlessly doing what *you* want to do, you have to do what the *Lord* wants you to do. That is sacrifice, generally speaking, and when you learn these lessons you quit thinking about yourself and you fall in love with your contacts. You love the people, and if you love them you can baptize them.

The Lord says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." He assumed that would be enough love for your neighbor. (Yes, and it usually is, since most of us have a pretty fair opinion of ourselves.) Isn't it interesting that he never tells us why we should love our neighbor? I believe I can tell you why he said that: it was so that you could baptize your neighbor. I don't believe you can baptize your neighbor unless you love your neighbor. But if you love him you can. He will let you. It is very much the same situation as with young girls who want diamond rings. Some say they don't but they're probably lying. All young girls want diamond rings, and that is as it should be. But I've never known a young girl who would take a diamond ring from a young man unless she knew that he loved her first. You see, it means too much. And so it is with our neighbors. If we love our neighbors they are much more apt to listen to us and accept the principles we teach. Then we can baptize our neighbors and the kingdom will roll forth, built on love and unselfishness.

Unselfishness and Patience

It is important that we be unselfish, so says the Lord. Sister Emma Riggs McKay came down here to BYU and spoke to the sisters some years ago. I think at least part of what she said could be repeated here. She was talking about the qualifications that women should have in order to be good mothers, and she said this:

There are many qualifications that a woman should have to be a good wife and a mother, but the most important is patience. [The Art of Rearing Children Peacefully, p. 4]

Patience is a virtue that has to be learned. No one comes here with patience. Generally speaking, little children are the most impatient people in all the world. If they don't get their way they scream and holler and cry. Some beat their heads on the floor. I had one that did that. He came to this earth psychologically opposed to the word *no*. He couldn't stand to have anybody say no to him. If I said, "No, no, Kirk," he would turn around and beat his head on the floor or on the wall or anyplace he could reach. I don't think he learned that from me, though (generally speaking) I believe children do learn selfishness from their parents. We make them that way because we love them so we let them have their own way until they get to the point where they are spoiled rotten. Then all of a sudden we wake up to the fact that we've got to do something about Junior. He is spoiled rotten. After all, he's running our whole family; and that is a little too much responsibility for a child of four or five, to run a family of seven or eight, but they do it all the time. And so we embark on a long, concentrated program of trying to talk Junior out of being selfish. It usually only takes fifty to seventy years.

Sister McKay says that the sisters should be patient:

[Have] *patience with children's and husband's tempers, patience with their misunderstanding, with their desires, with their actions.*

Suppose you ask your husband to carry a mattress downstairs, and instead of carrying it carefully so that not a speck of dirt touches its clean coverage, he throws it through the window upon the lawn below. [Now, I'm not saying that President McKay threw a mattress through the window. Don't misunderstand. Sister McKay was saying this.] He probably did not think of the grimy dirt from the window frame soiling the cover nor of the possible dirt that might be on the lawn. All he wanted was to save time and energy and get the thing over with in a hurry. Will you rave and rant at him, call him a stupid creature who never does things right, or will you think, "Oh, what's the use! The thing is done. Better make the best of it." Always the latter if you can make yourself be calm. Even a slightly sarcastic remark will bring a disagreeable answer, and you'll wish you had not said a word. [The Art of Rearing Children Peacefully, pp. 4-5]

Sister McKay continues by telling of a time she and President McKay went down to California to dedicate a meetinghouse. She says:

I accompanied my husband to a dedication of a meetinghouse in Los Angeles. We stopped on Wilshire Boulevard to get our car washed. [I think that is an interesting characteristic/personality trait of the prophet. He was going to dedicate a house to the Lord and he was not going to arrive in a dirty car.] I sat on a bench and the President was standing over by the car. Suddenly at my elbow I heard a tiny voice say, "I guess that man over there loves you."

Surprised, I turned and saw a beautiful boy about seven years of age with dark curly hair and large brown eyes.

"What did you say?"

"I said, I guess that man over there loves you."

"Why, yes, he loves me; he is my husband. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, 'cuz, the way he smiled at you. Do you know, I'd give anything in the world if my Pop would smile at my Mom that way."

"Oh, I'm sorry he doesn't," I said.

"I guess you're not going to get a divorce, then."

"Oh, no, we're not going to get a divorce. We've been married nearly fifty years, and we are very happy. Why do you think that?"

"Oh, 'cuz everybody gets a divorce around here. My Pop is going to get a divorce from my Mom. I love my Pop and my Mom and I"—his voice broke and tears welled in his eyes, but he was too much of a little man to let them fall.

Then he came very close and whispered confidentially in my ear, "You'd better hurry out of Los Angeles, or you'll get a divorce, too." And he picked up his papers and shuffled down the sidewalk. [The Art of Rearing Children Peacefully, p. 10]

Oh, what a tragedy it is when parents cannot love each other enough to give their children the security that they need to grow up strong in the faith, to give them a firm "foundation that gives them confidence and self-reliance. We desperately need confidence in ourselves and in our parents and in the Lord. The greatest blessing that you can ever give your children will be to love your mate with all your heart and cleave unto each other.

Importance of the Family

We are here upon this earth, each of us, to fill a great mission. Everyone that comes to this earth has a mission to fulfill. The Father had a mission with respect to this earth. His was the mission of creation. He has created everything that is here. We are all his handiwork; yes, we are his children. God, our Heavenly Father, is a family man, and he believes in families. If you don't think so, just look around you. We all belong to him. We are his family, and all of the great blessings that he has in store for his children will come through families. They

don't come any other way. Of course, all of his children who are worthy will have the opportunity to have this blessing. Exaltation is a family affair, and so we build temples (houses dedicated to the Lord), but temples are *family* houses. They are set apart to create families for all eternity. The sealing room in the temple is a family room and the altar of the temple is a family altar. Why, I believe that if we just did the washings, the anointings, the baptisms, the confirmations, the endowments, and the ordinations that take place in the house of the Lord and we never did any sealings there, the house really wouldn't amount to very much. We could probably tear it down and it really wouldn't make much difference. Everything is preliminary to what happens when a man and a woman kneel across the altar of the temple and there make covenants with each other before witnesses in the sight of the Lord for time and all eternity. It is so important that we have this experience. That is the great purpose, the work and the glory of our Father in heaven. He believes in families.

Our elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we meet, also had a mission with respect to this earth, but his was the mission of redemption. He has redeemed all the creations of the Father. That was altogether necessary.

You can understand how important those two missions are, can't you? If it hadn't been for the Father, we wouldn't be here—none of us. If it hadn't been for the Son, it really would have made no difference whether we came here or not, for everything would have been wasted, but they were true and faithful and fulfilled their missions, and now *you* have a mission. Every one of you has a mission that is just as important as the mission of the Father and the Son. That mission is the same mission that was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The Mission of Adam and Eve

I am aware that you know what happened in the Garden of Eden, but I think it might be profitable if I refreshed your memory just a little bit.

Adam found himself in a very favorable set of circumstances. He was resting comfortably in the garden. He had a job; yes, the Lord had told him to dress and keep the garden. That is all he had to do. That is no big deal if you don't have weeds growing in the garden, and there were no briars, thistles, and noxious weeds growing in the Garden of Eden. I rather imagine if you looked very closely you would find that Adam was playing around with a stick that was kind of crooked on the end, looking very much like a golf club. (Now, of course, there is nothing wrong with playing with a golf club as long as you fulfill your required responsibilities first.)

I heard President Joseph Fielding Smith say one time that Adam would still be in the Garden of Eden if it hadn't been for Eve. You see, he was enjoying it there. The Lord, looking upon that scene, saw that it was not good for man to be alone. I believe that he saw that if he didn't give Adam some help, he would never get out of the Garden of Eden. And so the Lord prepared a helpmeet for Adam, someone to help him out of the Garden of Eden. And Eve did her job marvelously well, as the sisters always do. You can depend on the sisters.

One time I was visiting with Sister Smith and Brother Joseph Fielding came in while we were talking. She turned to him and said, "President, would you tell Brother Rector what you're going to do when you meet Mother Eve."

Brother Smith said, "I'm going to go up to her and throw my arms around her and give her a big kiss. I'm going to tell her how happy I am that she did what she did in the Garden of Eden because if it hadn't been for her we wouldn't be here."

It is important that we realize that our first parents met their responsibilities. You see, Eve

became dissatisfied with the status quo and I have found that the sisters have been dissatisfied with the status quo ever since. That's true, they are. Eve fulfilled a great mission in provoking her husband to good works. That seems to be the sisters' responsibility, and they do it marvelously well. I am sure that there is a list lying on top of my dresser right now. It is a very simple thing. It says things like "Hang the picture," "Fix the screen door"—you know, just simple things, nothing earthshaking. It isn't that she's trying to counsel the Brethren (you're not supposed to do that), but if I feel like doing something constructive, she would like me to start right here, and that's as it should be.

Eve and Adam were given a great commandment in the Garden of Eden. They were told that they shouldn't eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; yes, but I don't believe there is a tree of knowledge of good and evil today. I am from Missouri. I was living in Jackson County, Missouri, when I was recalled into the navy just before joining the Church, and I have looked it over pretty good. That commandment doesn't mean anything to us today. It was very important to Adam and Eve, but it doesn't mean anything to you and me.

Raise a Family in the Lord

The second great commandment (which was of first importance) was that they should be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. Why? A statement from the First Presidency quotes "that you may have joy and rejoicing in your posterity." You see, "men are that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). That is what the prophet Lehi said of man and the Prophet Joseph Smith added to that when he said that "joy and happiness are the object and design of our existence and will be the end thereof if we pursue the path that leads to it."

We are here, then, to be happy—each one of us—and to find real joy, but there is no real joy in this earth outside of fulfilling this great commandment of raising a family in the Lord.

We are here to raise that family (not just raise a family, but raise a family *in the Lord*). That will take the very best that's in you. Yes, it will take sacrifice and it will take obedience (those two great lessons that you learned in the mission field). Those lessons are primarily to get you in condition to fulfill your eternal mission of raising a family.

Temple Marriage

In order to be successful in fulfilling this mission, there are a few things you will have to keep in mind. First, you must be married in the temple. If you raise a family outside of the temple, you lose it and you will fail in your mission, and so you have to be married in the temple. That means you will have to be in condition to go there and then keep yourself in condition to go to the house of the Lord by living in obedience to the commandments. You might call those the "training rules" the Lord has established that you might have this great blessing in his house; in order to be married in the temple you will have to keep the commandments of God.

If you need to repent, do it. You see, the Master made that possible for us, and everyone of us needs it from time to time. There are things we haven't done that we should have done, or there are things we should have done that we didn't do, but he says that if you will come unto him and have faith in him, confess your sins and forsake them, and follow him, then you go free, for he has paid the price for us. Wouldn't we be silly not to take advantage of that great gift? So, if we need to repent, we should do it.

It is also very important that you not only be in condition to go to the house of the Lord but that you go there with someone who is worthy to go with you. You cannot go to the house of the Lord and be sealed by yourself. You have to have a companion, which means that you should date someone who can go to the house of the Lord. That means you have to

date a Latter-day Saint, and not only a Latter-day Saint but one who is worthy to go to the house of the Lord, or you can't go and be sealed. It is a fact of life that we marry whom we date. Very few times in our culture has anyone ever married someone without dating that person first. And if they do, it doesn't usually work out very well because they weren't very well acquainted. Dating is to get acquainted, but don't be misled. Just because you have fallen in love and you are engaged to be married, you have no rights to each other until you kneel across the altar at the temple, and then things that just a moment before were absolutely forbidden of the Lord become not only acceptable to the Lord but highly recommended. You see, you don't lose anything when you do it the Lord's way, but you have to do it his way if you want his blessing, and so it is important that you be in condition to go to the house of the Lord and keep yourself that way. Go there with someone who is also "in condition." That privilege comes from living the "training rules," or, in other words, keeping the commandments.

The Father's Responsibility

Now, it is also important that you understand that there is a division of responsibility in raising a family. The father has the responsibility of providing for the family. It is not the mother's responsibility. The father is going to have to feed, clothe, shelter, and educate them and send them on missions, etc., so his children will have the same experiences that he has had. All this is very expensive today. It costs a lot of money, and that means that you are going to have to have a good job, which means you're going to need a good education. Generally speaking, you need a good education to get a good job today. So get your education—just what you're doing right here—but don't drop out!

When you find the right girl or boy, as the case may be, you should have a witness that

he/she is the right person. You should have a testimony about the person that you marry, just like you have a testimony that the gospel is true, and you can get that kind of witness if you are in condition to get it. You know the gospel is true by studying and praying and attending Church, and you know the person that you marry is the right one by study and prayer and attending Church together. Spend time together; pray about it together (and alone), but be in condition to get that kind of an answer from the Lord. You need to get acquainted with each other under many different sets of circumstances.

Premortal Covenants

I am one who believes that many of you here this evening have made covenants with someone before you ever came to this earth. Maybe not everybody did, but many of you did. I did. That's right, and I was not a member of the Church. All you have to do to have such a covenant fulfilled is to live up to the light and knowledge that you have.

When I was eighteen years old, I saw this little black-haired girl who was just fourteen years old, walking down the street. Now, I know that is not MIA dating age, but I was not a member of the Church, so that didn't apply to me. The first time I saw her walk by I knew she was for me, and so I got acquainted with her and told her so. Yes, I told her she had four years to grow up in. I was going into the navy and I'd be back and marry her. So four years later I came back and married her. After all, I had told her I would, and that is the smartest thing that I have ever done.

Among other reasons, it was she who was home when those two young men came by and knocked on my door out in San Diego, California. They said they were taking a poll. Now, as a matter of fact, that was the kind of thing Moroni calls a stratagem. They weren't really taking a poll—they were tracting—they were using the survey technique. They

were asking questions that I had been trying to answer all my life, such as: "Do you believe that God speaks to man today?" "Do you believe that God has a true church on earth?" Well, my wife expected them to come back and give her the answers to the poll questions: "Why, yes, five percent of your neighborhood believe that God speaks to man today, and perhaps ten percent believe that he has a true church on earth." But instead, they came back and gave her *Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story* (a pamphlet) and the Book of Mormon.

She wrote me a letter in Hawaii, where I was undergoing a very accelerated training course in the navy. In her letter she said two young men had come through the neighborhood and knocked on the door. Mormons, they were, which of course meant nothing to me because I'd never heard of a Mormon. I really had no idea what a Mormon was. The only thing that registered on me was that two young men had knocked on my door with my wife at home and me 2,000 miles away. I didn't care what they called themselves. What were they doing calling on my wife? In her letter she said, "You know, it is rather strange. They both have the same first name—Elder." You see, we don't understand sometimes that we in the Church have a vocabulary all of our own and that people outside the Church many times don't know what the Mormon elders are talking about. They also invited her to the "stake house." She didn't eat before she went, expecting to be fed. (It must have been an unusual meeting.) Often we do eat in the stake house, don't we? Sometimes it seems the Mormons meet to eat.

She didn't mention any more about the Church until I came home some thirteen weeks later, and then the first thing she told me when I walked into the house (after having been gone for thirteen weeks) was the Joseph Smith story. When she said that a man had seen a vision in almost modern times, I thought that was the most preposterous thing I had ever heard in my life, and I laughed at her. How

could she be so gullible as to swallow this fabulous tale? She then did what the sisters have been doing since Eve's time: she cried. I could see that this really meant something to her, that she believed this fabulous story; so I said, "They must have left something for you to read." Everybody did—Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists—everybody had been in my home and they all left something to read. I was sure these Mormons had too. "Yes," she said, and gave me *Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story*, and I read it.

The power of that testimony didn't come through the printed word to me. I believe that it is necessary to have the elder or the sister there to bear their witness that they know it is true, and when that happens the Holy Ghost can confirm it to the heart of the person and he knows it too. That didn't happen to me, and so I said, "They must have left something else," and she gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon. I took the book and looked through it: "Five hundred and twenty-two pages written by a man, no doubt. I'm sure it's full of errors. I'll shoot this down in fifteen minutes." You see, I had become a real expert on religion by this time. I had read Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the Catholic Baltimore *Catechism*, *Father Smith Instructs Jackson*, and several other books on religion. I remember one book entitled *Human Life of Christ* by John Erskin, where he said that the way that Christ fed the 5,000 was that people who came out to hear him all brought their lunch with them and when he preached this sermon on giving of yourself they all opened their lunch and shared it with everybody. Isn't that a "beautiful explanation" of the Lord's miracle?

I was sure that all religions were man-made, and so I had made up my own religion. It seemed to be as good as anybody else's. I took the book and declared, "I'll shoot it down in fifteen minutes. I'll show you; this is another man-made book." And I started to read the

Book of Mormon. I hadn't finished 1 Nephi before I found myself hoping above everything else in this world that this book was true. I said, "Dear God, please let it be the truth. Please let it be true, for if it is, it will answer all the questions I've been trying to answer all my life." And I read on.

I hadn't finished 2 Nephi before I knew it was true. I found myself reading that book—every word—as the word of the Lord to me. I had prayed one simple prayer to the Lord. If I had prayed it once I had prayed it a thousand times. It was simply, "Dear God, please show me the truth. Please lead me to the truth," and here, through no effort of my own, he had sent these two young men right into my living room with the truth. I knew it was true. I was sure after such a long search that if I ever found the truth it would be like a Cecil B. De Mille production—in technicolor, panavision, and stereophonic sound. No one who heard it could turn it down. It would be blared from the housetop—the truth! That's what I thought.

Well, you should have seen these two elders that knocked on my door. To begin with, they didn't like each other. No, they didn't get along well at all. One was a very happy soul. He had made up a joke for almost every discussion, and when he would tell his joke somewhere in our discussion his companion turned livid red all over. The companion was a very sober young man. He took Alma to heart when he said, "Be sober, my son." He seldom ever smiled. Their grammar was atrocious. Their diction was worse than mine. So far as knowledge of the world is concerned, they really didn't have any. I knew much more about what was going on in the world than they, but though they didn't particularly like each other, they both loved the Lord. They were willing to overlook these little idiosyncrasies that they each had which made them unacceptable to each other, in order to do the work the Lord had called them to do, and they did it marvelously well.

It is my witness that the Lord can speak through nineteen-year-olds and speak eloquently, for he did through them. They came to my home the first time (after I returned home), having fasted and prayed for two days. My wife had frightened them: I was going to be a tough nut to crack (or so my wife believed). But before they got to my home I'd finished 2 Nephi and I knew the book was true. I never argued with one word that they told me. But you see, they would have never gotten in my home if it hadn't been for my helpmeet.

The missionaries knocked on our door just one day after my wife moved into our home. She was what missionaries call a "new move-in," and they always make good contacts. She was also expecting our third child—a new birth in the family seems to make parents receptive to the gospel too. Well, I didn't know when I saw her walking down the street when she was fourteen how I knew her, but I know now. I'm sure we were very well acquainted before we ever came to this earth, and I am sure that many of you can find your covenanted mates if you will just keep the commandments and be in condition to recognize them when you see them. That is very important.

The Responsibility to Have Children

To continue, in order to fulfill your mission you have to first be married in the temple. Second, you must be able to provide for your family (that is the father's responsibility), which means he needs to have a good job. In order to get a good job he needs a good education, so get your education. Don't drop out. Stick with it. It may be tough—you may not be able to wear the kind of clothes you'd like to wear, live where you'd like to live, or drive the kind of car you'd like to drive—but those things don't make a real difference anyway. What *does* make a difference is that you get yourself in condition so that somebody will pay you for your services, that you can provide

for your family. Make the material sacrifice to get your education, but don't sacrifice your family to get an education. You see, you don't sacrifice your family for anything. That is your reason for being here upon this earth—to raise a family in the Lord. It would be ridiculous to trade your family for a Ph.D., so it is important that you follow the admonition of the prophet.

There is a First Presidency statement of April 14, 1969, which has to do with birth control. I believe it is the only time that such a statement has ever been issued by the President of the Church. It is signed by President McKay, President Brown, and President Tanner. It is so important that I am going to read you three paragraphs from it. This is what the Lord has said through his prophet with respect to birth control:

We seriously regret that there should exist a sentiment or feeling among any members of the Church to curtail the birth of their children. We have been commanded to multiply and replenish the earth that we may have joy and rejoicing in our posterity.

Where husband and wife enjoy health and vigor and are free from impurities that would be entailed upon their posterity, it is contrary to the teachings of the Church artificially to curtail or prevent the birth of children. We believe that those who practice birth control will reap disappointment by and by.

However [and there's always a however; here it is] we feel that men must be considerate of their wives who bear the greater responsibility not only of bearing children, but of caring for them through childhood. [Now we said there is a division of responsibility in raising a family. The father has to provide for the family, but the mother has to bear the children and care for them through childhood. It doesn't mean she can't have some help from her husband, but she'd better not expect too much because she probably won't get it. You see, he has a different responsibility.] To this end [the statement continues] the mother's

health and strength should be conserved and the husband's consideration for his wife is his first duty.

Now, I think that says it pretty plain. The Lord is saying that you should have your family when you can. You really can't make a decision when you're going to have children anyway. The Lord makes that decision. You can only decide that you're not going to have children. I doubt if you can afford that. So, have your family when you can but not so fast that you destroy the health of the mother. The mother's health is the only real judgment criterion.

You don't have to worry about whether you are going to overpopulate Utah, the United States, or the world. That is part of the wisdom of men that is foolishness to God. I flew in a private airplane from Yuma, Arizona, up to Las Vegas, Nevada, just a few hours ago to catch a commercial airplane. Looking down, I didn't believe that rich and fertile area is overpopulated. All it needs is water. What we need is to figure out a way to get water into the area and quit living like pigs and take care of the place where we do live. The Lord says that "the earth is full, and [there is enough] to spare." He didn't say that we are going to have any problem with feeding the people here upon this earth, and I don't believe we are either.

I worked for the Department of Agriculture for ten years. (I was born and raised on a farm back in Missouri.) It is a fact that for over forty years we have been paying farmers in this country *not* to produce, and they are still overproducing! That is right. Still we overproduce. If we just turned around and gave the farmer incentive to produce, I'm convinced we could do a fair job of feeding the whole world from right here in the United States of America. But the American farmer is kind of strange. He likes to be paid for what he does.

No, I don't believe we have to worry about overpopulation; all we have to worry about is keeping mothers healthy. So, have your family

when you can but not so fast you destroy the health of the mother. Then you will have the right application with respect to birth control.

I think LeGrand Richards was number eleven out of thirteen. I heard him say one time he sure is glad they didn't stop with ten. I believe that is the right attitude.

Church Activity

It is also important that you raise this family in the Church. That means you have to be active in the Church, which means you have to pay your tithing. There is something about the payment of tithing that makes people active in the Church. I am not sure exactly what it is, but it sure works. I look at tithing records and activity records every weekend in conjunction with stake conferences and they always coincide. People who pay their tithing are active in the Church. I think the day will come when the Lord will divide the Church right down the tithing line. If you pay your tithing, then you have a promise from the Lord that you will always have sufficient for your needs. That is what he says—he will open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing which you will not be able to contain. You will be able to provide for all the choice spirits the Lord sees fit to send you and you will be happy and active and you will raise your children in the Church. It is important, a principle with great promise, and it couldn't be more important.

I have thought at times that the Church needs the tithing of the members of the Church or it couldn't operate, but I doubt seriously if the Church really needs the tithing of the members to carry on its operations. The Lord runs the Church and I am sure that he knows where all the gold is. That is right. I am convinced he could give one of my cohorts, Elder Loren Dunn (who is six feet six inches) a shovel and tell him where to dig and I believe that Loren could bring back enough gold in about one day to run the Church for the next fifty years.

You see, *we need* to pay our tithing because we need to have the assurance that we can call upon the Lord at any time and he will be there. It is vitally important that we keep these commandments.

Now, that is about all you have to do to fulfill your mission here upon this earth. It is very simple, isn't it? *First*, you have to be married in the temple, and you should keep yourself in condition to go back there frequently so that you can renew that covenant. If you don't you will forget your covenants, and if you forget your covenants you will find yourself breaking them and you won't get away with that. *Second*, you should provide for your family, which means that you should get a good education so you can hold a good job. Get your education. *Third*, have your family when you can but remember the health of the mother. You must keep her healthy. *Fourth*, pay your tithing so that you will always be active in the Church and raise your family in the Church. Now, if you will do these four things, you can do just about anything else you want to do while you are here upon this earth and it won't make a whole lot of difference. Some things are important; others are not so much. These are vitally important.

The Final Judgment

Now, you know what you are supposed to do, right? Any doubt in anybody's mind what you are supposed to do while you are here? It won't do any good to stand before the bar of God and say, "I didn't understand. I'll do better next time." There won't be any next time when you stand before that bar; that is a one-time affair. You may say, "No, I didn't understand; as a matter of fact I've never heard it." The Lord will say, "Just a moment. Will you rerun that tape, please."

We are all going to attend the big movie, you know, and that is not my idea either. The Lord says that. It is in the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, verse 108:

And then shall the first angel again sound his trump in the ears of all living, and reveal the secret acts of men, and the mighty works of God in the first thousand years.

We are all going to be there. Yes, it is the great judgment day and we all are going to see everything just the way it happened. The first thousand years should be very exciting because we may even see the creation period. There may be some geologists that will want to dig a hole and sink in it. (Nothing against the geologists, you understand. It's just that I believe they should spend more time studying the scriptures and not looking at so many rocks.) In verse 109 we read:

And then shall the second angel sound his trump, and reveal the secret acts of men, and the thoughts and intents of their hearts, and the mighty works of God in the second thousand years.

Everything that man ever did or thought is going to be revealed for everybody to see.

When we come to the sixth thousand years, that is really going to be an interesting little segment of this movie because we all are going to be there and be main characters as well. We are going to know exactly what you said and what you thought; it will be displayed for everybody to see right up there in front of everyone. Now if you want something removed from that tape there is a way to do it. You must sincerely and truly repent. This is precisely what the Lord says—he uses the term "blotted out." He says that "their sins will be blotted out" (those that you have fully and truly repented of). Suppose we are all there watching that movie and along comes a big blot. Can you imagine the speculation on the blots? People would say, "Ooh, did you see that? I wonder what happened there?" or "Just as I suspected!!"

Good Works and Honesty

It just might be that the Lord will have the blots spliced out and put all the good things together. Some people may have a short tape, which is the deathbed repentance tape. I am not saying that deathbed repentance isn't good. I am just saying that it is not enough to be good—you have to be good for something. You see, we are going to be judged according to our works, so our life's tape should be filled with good works. I don't think it is going to do us any good to deny our acts. Brother J. Golden Kimball said that the hardest thing he ever did was to convince the Brethren he didn't say it.

It is important that we be honest. If we are not honest, we are really no good. We are no good to ourselves if we lie to ourselves (that is called rationalization). You are the worst person in the world for you to lie to. You will get to believing yourself if you're not careful. We are no good to our friends if we are not honest, as they can't trust us; no good to the Lord because he can't use us unless, of course, it would be as a bad example. I presume we can always be used as a bad example.

At any rate, it is important that we be honest in what we do and accept the responsibility for our acts, because that is the reason we are here—to raise this family in the Lord—and it is a lot of fun. It couldn't be more fun, but it is important that you get about it as soon as you find the right mate. Some of our mission presidents have made statements to returning elders saying they had to be married within six months after they get home. Well, in my opinion they shouldn't have made such statements. Time really isn't a factor. Whether it is two days, two weeks, two years, or ten years, it doesn't really make any difference. You get married when you find the right girl or the right boy and you have a testimony about that person that he/she is the right one. As long as you keep the Lord involved you will be all right, but if the Lord isn't involved with you in your marriage, the marriage will fail. You can't succeed. And so

you know what you are supposed to do, and it is important that you get about it.

As the poet Shakespeare said,

*There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.*

[*Julius Caesar*, IV.iii. 216–22]

You see, you won't always have this opportunity. Opportunity, generally speaking, comes but once, and you'd better be ready to take advantage of it at that time.

Fulfilling our Missions

It is important that we understand what our responsibilities are. I will close with a verse from a play that I saw here at BYU some time ago, called *Joan of Lorraine*. Some of you may have seen it. It was well done. It depicts the story of Joan of Arc and how she heard voices from the Lord. She followed those voices and led the armies of France and was tremendously successful, but at the height of her success the tide of public opinion turned against her and she was tried by the Catholic Church, which did not believe in revelation from the Lord. The Inquisition gave her an option: she could either deny she heard those voices and they would let her live, in prison; or, if she insisted she heard those voices, they would burn her at the stake as a witch. Joan didn't want to die. She had everything to live for. She was just nineteen years old (about the age of a lot of you), but she knew she had heard those voices and she knew the Lord knew. She couldn't deny it (she was honest), and so she said these words:

*Every man gives his life for what he believes.
Every woman gives her life for what she believes.*

Sometimes people believe in little or nothing. Nevertheless, they give up their lives to that little or nothing. One life is all that we have and we live it as we believe in living it and then it's gone, but to surrender what you are and live without belief, that is more terrible than dying. More terrible than dying young. [Maxwell Anderson, *Joan of Lorraine*, Act III]

There are a lot of things more terrible than dying, my young brothers and sisters. Not to live up to the high commission which you received from your Heavenly Father when you were set apart to come to this earth and fulfill this mission—that is much more terrible than dying. And so it is important that we recognize that this *is* the most important mission that we could ever have: to raise a family in the Lord.

Raise up choice children. Teach them to love the Lord and then keep his commandments and walk uprightly before him, because when you do you will give them the surest foundation for real joy and happiness and if they are happy you will be too. Oh, it is great to be the parents of righteous children. On the other hand, in Shakespeare's words, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child" (*King Lear*, I.iv 288–89). When you teach your children to love the Lord—which means they keep his commandments—they will be thankful, happy, and successful, and so will you, for this is your mission.

The kingdom is rolling forth as never before. What a great time to live in the Church and kingdom of God. There has been a 94-percent increase in membership in the last twelve years, led by South America with an 1,100-percent increase and followed by Central America with a 956-percent increase in membership in the last twelve years. This increase is followed by the Orient (Japan, Korea, Philippine area), with a 750-percent increase. In the United States alone we had a 50-percent increase in the last twelve years. This is happening at a time when many of the Christian

churches are reducing in membership, but not so the Church and kingdom of God because, you see, it is that stone which the Lord revealed to Daniel, which would be cut out of the mountain without hands. No, it is not man-made. It was done by the Lord and it is rolling forth down the mountainside. It will break down all other kingdoms; it will fill the whole earth and stand forever.

The kingdom is a winner. Isn't it great to be part of a winner? Oh, I love a winner. I hate to lose. I think I am the worst loser in all the world. I don't believe this business that "it matters not whether you win or lose but how you play the game." I think it makes a lot of difference whether you win or not. I believe we came here to win, and we will win if we stick with the Lord, because the Lord is not a loser. He is a winner, and so is the Church and kingdom, and so will we be when we do it the Lord's way.

My young brothers and sisters, I am a witness before God that he lives. I know he lives and that he hears and answers prayers, for he has heard and answered mine. I bear testimony to you that Jesus is the Christ and that he lives. I know he lives and that he has reestablished his Church upon the earth in our own day and time through the great Prophet Joseph Smith, wonderful man that he was, and that we have a prophet of God on earth today. President Harold B. Lee is a prophet of the living God, and he makes the decisions in the Church and kingdom of God today under the direction of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose Church it really is.

I bear this witness unto you in all soberness and leave you my love and my blessing and my most fond affection, to you, the youth of Zion, upon whom so much depends. You are the best generation that has ever been born and much depends on you. We are looking to you to bear off the kingdom triumphantly, which I am persuaded you will do. I hope you know that I love you because I do. In Jesus' name. Amen.